[Shave Them]

August 1, 1939

Enoch Ball (white)

223 Haywood Rd.

West Asheville, N. C.

Millworker, barber, preacher

Anne Winn Stevens, writer

Asheville, N. C.

SHAVE THEM WEEK DAYS; SAVE THEM SUNDAYS Original Names Changed Names

Enoch Ball Ezra Burris

Little Turkey Creek, N. C. Lone Duck Creek

West Asheville, N. C. South Beaumont

Tennessee Unchanged

Virginia Unchanged

South Carolina Unchanged

West Virginia Unchanged

Bob Self Jack Baker

Laurel Section Ivy Section

Madison Co. Jackson Co.

Mitchell Co. Haywood Co.

Asheville, N. C. Beaumont

Grandmother Harrell Grandmother Harper

Simon Harrell Sid Harper C9 - N.C. Box 1- Original Names Changed Names

Red Hill Unchanged

California Creek Colorada Creek

Riverside Amusement Park Unchanged

Mr. & Mrs. H. A. Dunham Mr. & Mrs. Dart

Spartanburg, S. C. Columbia, S. C.

Hartsville, S. C. Cokersville, S. C.

Gaffney, S. C. Bluffton, S. C.

Hamrick Mills Co. Hoskin Mills

Dr. Granberry Dr. Gates

Mr. Taylor Mr. Tate

Cherokee Co. Muskogee Co.

Florence, S. C. Fayetteville

Portsmouth, Va. Norfolk, Va.

Atlanta Unchanged

Washington, D. C. Unchanged

New York Unchanged

Evangeline Booth Unchanged

Horney Heights, West Asheville Hartwell Heights

Deaverville Road Deerview Road

SHAVE THEM WEEKDAYS; SAVE THEM SUNDAYS

Ezra Burris, stout and middle-aged, stood behind his barber's chair, spreading lather on the back of a small boy's head. As he smoothed the lather with a stroke of his shaving brush, he continued the argument on the question of liquor stores with the five-year-old's father, a stocky, round-faced, young fellow with a shock of thick, black hair.

“But nawthin' could be worse'n what we have now,” interposed the round-faced young man seriously from his seat on the bench against the wall. “You can get licker anywheres in this county.”

“So you think my openin' more places where liquor kin be got, you'd cyore people of drinkin',” growled Ezra, pointing the razor at his opponent. “Did you ever hear of cyoring a hawg of a tin' by givin' him more swill? Before prohibition, I used to drink liquor in 14 dif'runt saloons in this town. But that didn't help the cause of tem'prance none.”

As Ezra talked, he revealed four front teeth missing in his upper jaw, and two in his lower. With expert strokes, he shaved the back of the child's head, held the shaving brush under the lavatory spigot for a moment, 2 then deftly removed the lather from the child's neck. Then he picked up a much used towel, dried and smoothed the tow-head, removed the strip of tissue from the child's neck, and freed him from the man-sized, enveloping apron. Still arguing, Ezra helped the boy climb down from his high perch on the metal seat adjusted across the arms of the man-sized, leather-cushioned chair.

The child wriggled delightedly, and rejoined his father on the bench beside the wall. His twin, identically clad in white blouse, light blue shorts, and white sandals, climbed eagerly up to the high perch. Ezra reached down a powerful paw, and helped him make the ascent.

The youngster, impressed with his own importance, submitted to the big apron and the tissue strip about his neck. Ezra ran the comb through the child's blond forelock, and with scissors posed in the air continued the argument.

“If you know liquor kin be had anywheres, then it's your duty as a good citizen to report that place to the p'lice, he said triumphantly, snipplng off a bunch of hair that slid to join the pack or two already heaped around the chair's base.

“What good would that do?” Inquired the children's father. “The police knows about them places already. They drink thar, theirselves!”

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“Then if any policeman buys the stuff,” contended Ezra, “A God-fearing cit'zen like you are should report him to the higher authorities and get him dismissed.”

“But the police don't buy any licker,” maintained the younger man. “They air treated to it by the bootleggers, so they'll keep quiet about where it is.”

As the argument waxed warm, the second child's hair was trimmed, the back of his head soaped and shaved, the soap, apron and paper slip removed. The metal strip on which the child had been seated being removed, also, the father took his seat in the chair, his short legs not quite reaching the unadjusted footrest; and the argument continued.

Meanwhile, the twins freed from parental control, first wriggled up on the bench against the wall, and surveyed themselves solemnly in the finger-printed mirror opposite the barber's chair. What they saw there of their own cropped heads and of their father, awaited in the big apron, seemed to amuse them. Giggling, they slid from the bench and became bolder. The smaller one squatting, ambled across the room, waving his arms in imitation of a frightened duck. The larger twin turned jitterbug, while a row of some half-dozen youngsters of all sizes gazed half in interest, half in contempt on such childishness.

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Their father, diverted from his argument, barked at them to be quiet. They desisted for a split second, but seeing him swathed in the big apron, soaped and quite helpless, gaily continued their imitations of the circus known to them as animal life.

“They are just being natural boys,” commented Ezra, as with a snip, snip of the scissors, he sent the father's black hair to join the heap already accumulated on the worn and shabby, green-and-red linoleum on the floor of the shop.

Shaved, and released, the round-faced young man ambled off with the twin boys. Other boys slipped in: barefooted boys with tousled heads, torn shirts, and baggy trousers, one trouser leg to the knee, the other around the ankle; neat freshly dressed youngsters with blond hair; blackhaired, undernourished boys in dirty overalls. Each climbed up into the same, man-sized chair, was incased in the same cotton apron, and had the lather removed from his neck with the same much used towel.

For a while, the work proceeded in silence. Trucks rumbled past. A Coca-Cola truck paused at the curb to deliver bottles next door. The narrow sidewalk, and the sharp curve of the street threatened to project a furniture van through the unwashed windows. Beneath the windows three dusty, cane-bottomed chairs stood 5 empty in the July sun. The small low-ceilinged room was only less torrid than the street.

When the rough bench along the wall was filled, some larger boy climbed into the other barber's chair to make room for a feeble old man, or for a buxom young mother with a prim, stiffly starched little girl in tow.

Two dingy white cabinets across the room were topped with bottles of hair tonic and shaving lotions in violent shades of red and purple. Above the lavatory hung a legend boldly printed on gray cardboard. It read: The Only Place You'll find Better Barbers is in the Next World. Red labels on the mirrors advertized remedies for hair and scalp.

Ezra, stout, middle-aged, heavy of jaw, his square face deeply lined, worked on with the regularity of clockwork. His thick, iron gray hair rose aggressively from its part, drooped at the sides and was shaved as close as any of his customers at the back of his head. His stiffly starched, white collar and black tie showed above his belted, green cotton smock.

“I wouldn't mind telling you my story,” he said politely when I approached the subject, “if I knew exactly what you'd like to know.”

“I've been told you are a preacher as well as a 6 barber. Is that so?” I inquired.

“Yes, I'm supplyin' at a country church on a Sunday,” he replied modestly, as he continued his hair cutting. “I conducts the Sunday Schools, preaches at the mornin' service, holds the young peoples' meeting in the afternoon, and preaches again Sunday night. The Baptist Church in the country, where I was employed regular, was so bad in debt, it lost all its property. The mortgage on it was foreclosed, and it had to be shut down.

“No, ma'am, I don't make any money at preachin'. What I made when I was servin' four country churches wasn't enough to pay my gas and oil bill. Once this winter, I went to a little country church in an ice storm. The regular preacher never come. So I filled in for him. The congregation took up a collection for me, and paid me $10 to show their appreciation. But that was unusual. Another time, I held a big meeting on Lone Duck Creek, in the tobacco farmin' section. The people there are real clever,” - a localism for kind hearted. “When I come to go home, I found they'd filled the back of my old sedan with garden stuff, groceries, and canned goods of all kinds.

“But for the most part, the churches where I preach are very poor. The farmers are hard up. They cain't 7 afford to pay a preacher much. Before I came back here and opened this shop ten year ago, I used to go around in Tennessee and Virginia and hold big meetings. But it was inconvenient and expensive taking my family with me. I had 14 children. No ma'am, I never left them behind. I didn't want to be separated from them. I had a good offer just the other day to go 'round holdin' revivals in Virginia, but I turned it down. Seems like I don't want to leave home.

“Before I took up that evangelistic work in the Baptist church, I worked with the Salvation Army for about 18 year. After I became a captain in the Salvation Army, I was sent to dif'rent places in South Car'lina, Virginia, and the coal mines in West Virginia. The Army sends it workers a new place every two years. Times got so hard I couldn't make a livin' for my fam'ly that way. So I resigned from the Salvation Army in 1927.

“When I come back here after resigning from the Salvation Army, there wasn't anything for me to do on Sunday but sit around and listen all the rest of my days. I didn't want to do that. So when a Baptist Evangelist, Brother Jack Baker, asked me to go around with him and hold big meetings, I joined in with the Baptists.”

After a few questions on my part, Ezra embarked on his life history, continuing his work as he talked.

“My father,” he said, “was a day laborer. He used to work for the city for a dollar a day, after he come here from the Ivy section in Jackson County. He owned a good farm in the country at one time. But he was a hard drinker. He lost the farm. He drank it all up.

“My mother had gone back to live with my Grandmother Harper - her mother. She died at Grandmother's when I was six year old. After she died, my father went away, and we didn't see or hear of him for sev'ral year. I lived with my Grandmother Harper.”

Ezra applied the razor to the lathered hair above a fifteen-year-old's ears, shaving it to a neat point on the side of the jaw.

“I went to school in a one-room schoolhouse, continued Ezra. “I had to walk three mile each way, and be in school by 7 o'clock in the mornin'. I didn't get out 'til four in the afternoon. The schoolroom benches was made of logs split in two. The smooth side was used for the seat. The school was a subscription affair. It lasted three month each year after the crops was laid by. There want no public school thar in them days. A lady school teacher went 'round and worked up the first school I went to. That was in Haywood County.

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Later I went to school in Jackson County. A young man worked up the school there. When I was ten your old, I stopped school. It would be hard to say what grade I was in. The school was all in one room and didn't have grades. I was in the fifth reader, and the primary arithmetic. Most of the readin' lessons I got after that, was from readin' billboards after Pa took me to Beaumont to live. When I joined the Salvation Army - I was 22 then - I got interested in readin' and studyin'.

“The house in Haywood County, where I lived with Grandmother Harper was made of logs. You could nigh have thrown a dog through the cracks. In winter the snow used to sift through them cracks at night, and heap up inches deep on the beds. There was a big fireplace where you could put a tree for a back log.

“My Grandfather, Sid Harper, had a big farm. He raised corn and wheat.”

“And tobacco?” I asked.

Ezra looked askance at the big-eyed, listening children. “Only as much as he wanted for his own use,” he conceded reluctantly, as he reached into a glass jar on the nearest cabinet for a fresh strip of tissue.

“Grandfather made wagons, too, and two-seated buggies. He kept sheep. He made my grandmother a loom. She used to card wool, and spin and weave cloth. She made me a 10 jeans suit for a Christmas present. My Grandfather made me leather shoes for Christmas.

“My Grandfather's people were Dunkards. They had a curious way of Baptizing. They made the candidate stand so he'd face down the river. They dipped him in the river three times, face downward, 'In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.' They believed in witches. My grandfather was a witch doctor.

“Three year ago, I went back there on a visit. There was still a few Dunkards left, and a small Dunkard church at a place called Red Hill.

“My grandfather Burris had a farm too. He made beaver hats - tall ones like this.” Ezra demonstrated their height with both hands - scissors suspended on his thumb. “He used to get $5 apiece for them. Both my Grandfathers claimed they was Irish. They used to tell great tales about how they left Ireland and come to this country. But I never paid much

attention to these stories. Harper and Burris sound like English names to me. I doubt whether they was ever out of North Car'lina.

“After my father had been away two year, he come back bringin' another wife. He took me to a farm he was livin' on at Colorada Creek, in Jackson County. He was farmin' on shares. He used to make about 11 50 cents a day; but not in money. He worked only one or two days a week. Sometimes he'd bring home a big hunk of fat back. Sometimes he'd bring a peck of corn. We lived on cornbread, fat back, and buttermilk. We didn't have no cows. The milk was given to us by a rich farmer, who had a farm acrost the hill from us. Nobody sold milk in those days.

“I remember we used to be told to take small bites of bread and meat, and large mouthfuls of buttermilk. There'd always be plenty of buttermilk, but nobody knowed when we'd get more bread.

“My stepmother, I think, would have given her life for any one of us. But she was red-headed and hard to live with. After we moved to town, and I was workin' in the cotton mill at night, when I come home I'd go to sleep sittin' in my chair. My stepmother'd take me by the hair, and throw me down on the floor. Then she'd stomp on me. But I wouldn't like to have that told. For I do believe that woman would have died for any one of our family.

“Before we moved to town, I used to work on the farm. We worked from daylight 'til dark, with an hour for dinner. I hoed corn and suckered tobacco - that was pullin' off the suckers. And I picked off tobacco worms. The worms was three to four inches long - impudent fellows they was. They had a horn on the 12 tail. They was like these new autymobiles. You couldn't tell by lookin' at 'em what direction they was likely to go. When they was disturbed, you could hear them grittin' their teeth.

“When I was ten year old, my father moved to town and began workin' for the power and light company. He was paid from 80 cents to a dollar day. He was tryin' to do better about drinkin'. He went to work at 7 in the mornin' and come home about five in the evenin'.

Later, he worked for the city, cleanin' and repairin' streets. He was paid at the same rate and worked 10 hour a day.

“When I was 11 year old, I began workin' in the cotton mills. At first I learned to tend a frame. After I'd learned how, I got ten cents a night. I worked 12 hour on a shift, with a half hour off for lunch. Six frames was as much as anyone was allowed to tend. The work paid ten cents a frame Being a beginner, I was allowed to tend only one frame.

“Later, I was put to work pickin' up quills. The workers would gather the empty quills (spindles) in baskets and carry them downstairs to be refilled. I'd gather up those that fell on the floor. It was my business to keep the floor clear of them. I got 25 cents a day for that. For a while I was a water boy, and carried water to the men that was puttin' 13 up new buildings.

“When I got older, I learned to put the quills in place after they'd been refilled. That paid 45 cents a day. When I got older yet, I learned weaving. It was piece work and varied, but after I had learned it good, I made about $1.50 a day.

“How's that?” he asked above the roar of a passing truck. “Did you ask if we had any recreation? None, only playin' marbles on Sat'day afternoons, and all day Sunday. We'd go up on the hill above the mill village and play there. We called the game 'roly hole.' After we'd won all a boy's marbles, we'd give 'em back to him, so we could win 'em all over again.

“We used to go swimmin' in the river down by the railroad yards. The water was filthy there. It was as black as ink. Father had forbidden me to go swimmin'. I used to slip off and go. I learned to swim so good, I used to swim clean acrost the river. There want no other amusement 'til the Riverside Amusement Park opened up.

“When I come home Sat'day noon with my pay envelope I'd turn it over to pa without even openin' it. He'd take it, open it, and go out to pay the grocery bill or whatever else he had

to pay. He had a big fam'ly 14 to support. There was 8 of us. But his fam'ly was never as big as mine came to be. 'Til I was 18 year old, I never opened my own pay envelope. Young people was treated different in them days. I wasn't allowed even to speak when Pa was talkin'".

"On Sat'day after I'd given my pay envelope to Pa, I'd go back to the mill, and work all afternoon cleanin' looms. We was paid 25 cents for every six looms we cleaned. I used to buy all my own clothes with the money I made that way. You could get a good suit of clothes then for $2.50.

"When I was 18, I left home, and lived with a friend of mine in the mill village. I paid $2 a week for a room. I was makin' $18 every two weeks then.

"I got to runnin' 'round with a hard drinkin' set of mill boys. We used to meet in a room where Wheathearts, a breakfast food, had been stored. We was called the Wheathearts. I drank considerable those days. I could get whiskey at 14 different saloons. We boys used to make the rounds of them all, drinkin' at each one. A lot of drunken factory workers used to gether round the Southern depot with their guns. They'd shoot at the feet of the people that would pass by, 'makin' them dance,' they called it.

"At night, drunken crowds used to go up town and tear down awnin's, and do other devilment. Nobody was 15 safe in those days, even in jail. Great big fat women would get drunk on the town square. It would take two, strappin' p'licemen to put one of them in the patrol wagon - it was called the black Maria - we called it the Cat. I've seen them big fat drunk women when they were being put in the wagon, kick out of the door and knock a p'liceman down.

"The saloon keepers in those days were big, brutal fellows. They'd just as soon throw a man out in the streets and tromp on him. My brother was a hard drinker. He was practically killed by a barkeeper. /One night he was drunk in a saloon. He got fresh with his tongue. That made the barkeeper mad. He leaped right over the bar, jumped on my brother, threw

him out in the street, and tromped on his face. My brother was so mashed up you couldn't hardly have known him.

“When I was about 22 year old, the Salvation Army came to town and started a big meeting in the old Methodist church that Mr. and Mrs. Dart had built on Factory Hill. That was in [?]. Me and my wife both went to the meeting. We was converted the first night. Before we were married my wife was a weaver in the cotton mill. She wove on the loom next to mine. She kept on workin' there for two or three years after we was married. Then she left the mill. Well, we was converted and married the same night.

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“After I was converted, I stopped drinkin'. The other boys in the gang made fun of me. They persecuted me at first and prophesied it wouldn't be long before I'd be back drinkin' with 'em. But I went right on livin' right. Before long they began going to the meeting too. One by one they was converted. There was 350 people converted at that big meeting. Us boys that had been called the Wheathearts from the storeroom where we used to meet, was now called the Sweethearts - meaning good hearts.

“We boys that joined the Salvation Army was anxious to get to work for the Lawd. We wanted to wear the uniform of the Salvation Army. But we didn't have any money for uniforms. So we went up town, and bought us dark blue caps with visors. The Salvation Army captain got us ribbons stamped with the name of the Army. We put the ribbons around the caps and wore the caps to the mill.

“The foreman didn't like the Army. So they made it hard for us. My foreman used to persecute me. He'd curse me, and keep lookin' all over my weavin' trying to find flaws in it. If he found a flaw, he'd abuse me and curse me out. That was the way foremen did in those days. They thought they must keep the mill workers in order by swearing at them and abusing 'em. They's far from doing that way today.

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“After I joined the Salvation Army, I'd work at the cotton mill all day, and hold meetin's at night. I got to be a sergeant-major. I wasn't paid anything for the work at first. I just chose to do it.

As a boy slid out of the chair and scooted to the door, Ezra paused in his narrative to point his scissors at the line of boys seated on the bench against the wall. “Which of you boys is next?” he inquired. A hatchet faced boy leaned forward.

“Come on you!” said Ezra singling the boy out with a wave of the hand.

“When I was 23,” he continued, as he adjusted the fresh strip of tissue around the boy's neck, “I left the-cotton mill, because the foreman kept on persecutin' me. I got a room acrost from the mill and set up as a barber. I didn't know a thing about cuttin' hair. I didn't have any lessons in barbering. I had to teach myself.

“First of all, I bought a chair. It could be folded up to a sitting position, or stretched out flat, but it couldn't be swung 'round and 'round. It wasn't that kind of chair. I used to have to walk all 'round it to get at the customer. I didn't even have money enough to buy a razor. I'd get these that used to be given away with boxes of a certain kind of coffee.

They weren't no good, of course. I got myself a pair of scissors, but I didn't have any clippers.

“The millworkers and railroad men used to come to me to get their hair cut. I don't know why they came. I had everything to learn, and there was a good barber shop acrost the street. One railroad man said he always come to me to have his hair cut when he was drunk, because then he could go to sleep, and couldn't feel it when I pulled his hair. Them railroad men was fine fellows!

“I worked up the business so good I was gettin' $60 a week reg'lar. I would work all day and hold meetings at night. Three nights in the week I held meetings out of doors on the street corners. The others was held indoors. Lots of people would call on me to hold funerals when any of their folks died. I'd close the shop and lock the door and go and have the funeral, sometimes in the morning sometimes in the middle of the afternoon. When I'd come back to the shop, I'd find 6 or 8 men sitting on the curb in front, waitin' on me. God was good to me, I guess, because I was doin' His work.

“When I gave up the barber shop to become a lieutenant in the Salvation Army, I was sent to Columbia, S. C. I was paid $18 a week. After I had worked as a lieutenant awhile I was promoted to captain. I worked in six small South Carolina towns, doing evangelistic work. That was my territory. I used to hold as many as 10 street corner 19 meetings a day.

“One day in Cokersville, S. C., I was arrested for preachin' on the street. The chief of p'lice come up and touched me on the shoulder when I was preachin'. I turned to see what he wanted. “Come to me to p'lice headquarters', sez he. I turned back to the crowd and finished my sermon. When I was through and had dismissed the crowd, he come up again. 'I'm arrestin' you', he said.

“He took me to the p'lice court. The judge there was a young red-headed fellow - a good sort. The chief shoved me to a seat, and turned 'round and locked the door. There was sev'ral p'licemen sitting 'round. Nobody said anything. Everything was dead quiet for sev'ral minutes. Then the judge asked.

“What you been doing to get arrested, Captain?'

“'Ask the chief,' I said. 'He brought me in'.

“He was preachin' on the street corner', said the chief.

“'Were you obstructin' traffic on the street?' asked the judge.

“'Ask the chief', I said.

“'No', said the chief, 'He and the crowd wasn't obstructin' traffic on the street.'

The judge turned to me. 'Were you blockin' up the sidewalk so nobody could pass, coming or going by?'

“'Ask the chief', I said.

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“'No, he wasn't blockin' the sidewalk, judge,' said the chief.

“'Then chief, what did you arrest him for?' asked the judge.

“'Well, judge,' said the chief of police, 'if an autymobile had come down the street goin' 60 mile an hour, that crowd was so thick somebody would have been killed before they could have got out of the way.'

“'How about it, cap'n Burris?' asked the judge.

“'Seems like the day I come into this town,' sez I, 'I read a sign what says, “Speed limit 15 mile.”

“'You have something good there, cap'n Burris,' said the judge. 'Case dismissed'.

“Another time,” continued Ezra, “I was sent to Bluffton, S. C. to get up a big meeting there. I had to collect funds to pay the expenses of the meeting. I went to the president of one of the cotton mills, and told him what I had to raise. He said, 'Cap'n, you do a lot of good among the millworkers. Here's my check. I'm glad to help you.' He turned and wrote out a check and handed it to me. It was for $500.

“Then I went to the president of the Hoskin Mills, the other cotton mill in Bluffton. The president knew who I was. I'd buried a whole fam'ly that worked in his mill. They was four in the fam'ly. They all 21 died of typhoid fever about the same time. I had a friend who was an undertaker. When I told him about this poor fam'ly, he furnished me four cheap coffins free. I had the fam'ly buried. The president of the Hoskin Mill knew about this.

“'How much did that other mill president give you?' he asked. I told him. So he wrote me out a check for $500. Then I...”

“Wait a minute,” I begged. “Tell me about those cases of typhoid. “What caused them?”

“There was a epidemic of typhoid in Bluffton,” he said. “There was about 10 or 15 cases in that one mill village. It came from drinkin' well water. The sanitary conditions was very bad. After the epidemic broke out, the health authorities had an investigation. Sanitary conditions was improved after that. Yes, there was other cases in town, but most of 'em was in that village. That was in 1923. Mill villages everywhere is a long ways ahead of what they used to be. The mill owners never used to have the houses painted or repaired. The sanitary conditions used to be bad. They're some better now.

“Well, I had to collect $2,000 for that big meetin' at Bluffton. The next person I went to was Mr. Tate, the preacher at the First Methodist Church. I asked him if he'd give out the schedule of services from his pulpit the comin' Sunday. He swelled up.

“'Cap'n Burris,' he said. 'I wouldn't do anything for you to save your life. You'll find all the preachers in this town is combined against you. How such money have you got to raise?'

“'I've got to get $2,000,' I answered, 'before I can begin the meetin'.

“'You'll never raise that much money in this town. Good day,' he said.

“Then I went to Dr. Gates, the preacher of the First Baptist Church. One of his deacons was head of the committee that had arrangements in charge. Dr. Gates said he'd never announce any of my meetings from his pulpit. He said he didn't approve of them.

“'That's [?] you, Dr. Gates, I said. 'But before I go can I have a word of prayer with you?' I didn't wait for him to answer me, I fell on my knees where I was. I prayed for him, for his board of deacons, for his congregation, for his work, for the other churches in the community, for the mill owners, and mill workers, for the mayor and other town officials. When I had prayed all 'round the world, I got up, put on my cap, and started to the door.

“'Come back a minute, Cap'n Burris,' called Dr. Gates. He took me by the arm and led me into the office next his study where his secretary was. He told the secretary to make a copy of my schedule of 23 services and to make out a check for $50 payable to me, and give it to him to sign.

“Me and my helpers raised $2,300 in [Bluffton?]. We had a big meeting there. There was 250 people in the church every evening. It was filled to capacity. There was 350 conversions.

“I had some queer experiences in [Bluffton?]. I was called to the Negro section one day, to a Negro girl whose baby had just died. The baby was so small of friend, the undertaker didn't have a casket tiny enough. We had to bury the infant in a cheese box. Yes, we did a good deal of work among the destitute Negroes in Bluffton. But, of course, most of the charity work we done was with the destitute whites.

“Another time, a big Bohemian died in one of the mill villages. He was so huge the undertaker didn't have a casket big enough. He had to be buried in a coffin box. It took 8 men to lift that box after he was in it.

“One day I was preaching on a street corner in Bluffton acrost from a moving picture house. People came and went. They's stop for a minute, then pass me right by and go into

that picture house. Those that stayed to the service was indifferent like. They was cold to me. I couldn't move 'em. So the next day I preached on that corner again. I preached agin worldly amusements. I preached agin that picture house in particular.

While I was preachin', I noticed a big, well-dressed man in a gray suit, standing somewhat back and listenin' to me. He looked at me so hard I thought, 'He's the owner of that picture house. He'll be layin' in for me.' But I went on with what I had to say. After I was through, he come forward. I thought, 'I'm in for it, now.'

“Cap'n Burris,' he said, holdln' out his hand, 'I'm with you'. I agree with you in all you said about that Hell on the corner, there. I'm the sheriff of Muskogee County. I've had to take 18 boys from this town to the State Reformatory at Fayetteville. Everyone of them boys, when I asked him where he got his start in meanness, told me he learned to be a ruffian from seeing gangster pictures showin' that theayter.

“Soon after I preached agin' that picture house, I was removed from Bluffton. I think that sermon had something to do with my being sent away. I was sent to Fayetteville where that State Reformatory is. I made the acquaintance of all them 18 boys. That was all members of the reformatory Brass Band. They was turning out to be fine fellows.

“I don't blame the young people for turnin' out bad.”

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Ezra commented. “It's the fault of the parents. They don't exercise no control over their children. They let them run wild, and go wherever they want to. No, I don't think young folks is any worse than they used to be. But there is more of them that's wild. Seems like a man can't take his wife into a restaurant or cafe to have a quiet meal these days, without seeing girls smoking cigarettes and drinkin' beer. And see men drinking, and hear them curse, and at some of these eating places the young folks dance.

A young mother seated with small daughter awaiting their turn chimed in.

“Young people do very well,” she said with some heat, “considering what they have to contend with, and the temptations they are up against. They used to do just as bad, or worse when you were growing up, I guess. But they didn't come out into the open like they do now. They were sly and underhand with their meanness. Then, again, folks is a lot more tolerant now than they used to be.”

“That's so,” agreed Ezra. “It used to be if a woman was seen taking a drink of licker, or if she smiled at men and talked to them on the street, she'd be looked on as bad, and driven out of the community. People is broader minded than they was.” Then the young woman had left, Ezra commented, “I came near getting myself in bad with that young [dame?], didn't I.”

“How does the Salvation Army pay its officers?” I inquired. “Well, it's according to how many children a man has,” replied Ezra. “Of course, when I started in to be a captain, I didn't have [14?] children. But every child that came, I was paid more. [When?] I left the Army I was getting $39 a week if I could collect it. When I begun the work, there want no Community Chest. We just went around to business men's offices with our tambourines and collected what we could. If we collected enough to run the work and pay our own salaries we was lucky. If we didn't collect the money, we just didn't get our wages.

“Some captains that work in big towns has to have a lieutenant to help them with the work. The lieutenant has to be paid a reg'lar salary, $18 a week. But I didn't have to get a lieutenant. My whole fam'ly used to help. My wife helped with the work, my oldest son played on the base drum, my oldest daughter played real good on the horn. She has her horn yet, and still plays on it sometimes. We'd all wear uniforms and hold services on the street corners. The smaller children carried the tambourines.

“When I worked with the Salvation Army in Norfolk, they'd just put on the Community Chest. I didn't like it as well. We used to collect more the old way.

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“I didn't' stay but a few months in Norfolk. I was sent from there to the coal mines in West Virginia. At that time the miners got high wages. They was generous with their money. I lived in several mining towns. The housing and sanitary conditions among the miners was pretty bad. My own livin' quarters were rough. Not as good as the salvation Army Headquarters are here, or those I had in South Carolina and the larger towns in Virginia. The public schools in the mining towns was good. My children all went to school there. But the last year or two I stayed at the mines, the miners were hard up. The mines was closed down a great deal of the time. I just couldn't support my family there. So I came back here to Beaumont.

“The Salvation Army used to require its officers to go to annual conferences. The most interesting conferences was the ones they had in Atlanta, Washington, and New York. The one in New York was a great sight! There were 3,000 Salvation Army officers marching in line up Broadway. I was marching in line with 'em. There was 18 brass bands playin' gospel hymns. Commander Evangeline Booth was there. She spoke to us in a big convention hall. She was the most powerful speaker I ever heard.

“When I came back here and opened up this shop, I figgered out that men with big fam'lies couldn't afford to pay much for having their children's hair cut, so I hung out the sign you see outside: 'Burris shop, children's hair cut, 15 cents.' I charge all children the same, so long as they are in school, high school students, and college students, too. You see my schedule of prices on the wall there?” The price list read “Haircut, 25 cents' shave, 16 cents, tonic, [1?] cents, [singe?], 15 cents; massage, [5?] cents.” At the foot of the card were the words, “it pays to look well.”

“The Barbers' Union,” declared Ezra, “has fought me. They want me to charge 25 cents for cutting children's hair and 40 cents for cutting men's hair. But with so much unemployment and low wages, their prices don't [seem?] fair to me.

“I get as much work as I kin do. The first of the week was slack, but today's makin' up or it. I have a man to help me on Sat'days. He has another job the rest of the week. And a white boy has his bootblack stand here every Sat'day. I make about $35 to $45 a week. One week lately I made $55.

“The Barbers' Union have it in for me, because I cut prices. [o?] about four years ago, they had me arrested for workin' overtime. I work according to their hours from eight o'clock in the mornin' to seven o'clock in 28 the evenin'. On Sat'days I'm allowed to work 'til nine p.m. That is, I must close the doors and lock 'em at the closin' hours. I'm allowed to finish up with the customers that are already in.

“Well, the Fourth of July come on a Sat'day that year. That was about four years ago. Of course, I was intendin' to close the shop on that day. But I read in the newspaper that Sat'day hours would be observed on Friday, July third. So I kept my shop open 'til 9 o'clock on Friday night. There was two barbers a-watching me acrost the street. At nine o'clock that evenin', just as I'd closed the door, two p'licemen come to my shop.

“'I can't let you in,' I said. 'This is closin' time.' “'You got to let us in Cap'n!' they said. 'We are sorry about this, but we've got to arrest you for workin' overtime.'

“Well, they took me to the courthouse before the judge.

“'Judge, I can give you bond,' I said. 'That won't be necessary,' sez he. 'Your face is sufficient. Be sure to come up here when your case is called.'

“That case dragged on for one month. I went to the courthouse and waited around every day for it to be called. Every day they kept puttin' it off. I found out that the lawyer what was to try the case was in sympathy with the Barbers' Union, so I got a lawyer of my own. I won the case all right.

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“I have a nice little home in the country out on the Deerview road beyond Hartwell Heights and the hosiery mills. It has an acre of ground, and house with seven rooms. There's 15 of us sits down at table there every day. My father lives with me. He's 88 years old, but he can still get around. He gets out some every day.

“My wife's had 14 children; but she's still hale and hearty. She weighs 160 pound. We raised 11 of the 14 children. My oldest daughter's come back to live with us now. She's married and has her three children with her. There's [6?] of my children still living at home, besides my oldest daughter. My youngest is 6 year old. He ain't in school yet. He wasn't old enough to go last year.

“All of my children that are old enough has graduated from high school except my oldest son. His eyes gave out in the last year of high school, so he had to quit. But he got himself a good job with the Southern Railroad. He's married and livin' in South Car'lina. My second daughter's married, too, and livin' away from home. I have six grandchildren.

“They are a fine set of children. I've never seen them take a drink of liquor - not even of beer. I've never caught 'em smoking seegars or cigarettes. I've never heard of them dancing. They don't go away from home much. Not that I make stay there, but they don't seem to care to go anywheres but to church, I brought 'em up that way.

A slim, neatly dressed, solemn looking young man came into the shop, and talked to Ezra in an undertone. After he had gone, Ezra said “That was my second boy. He graduated from high school with all the honors. He couldn't get no job at first, but he's workin' in a filling station up the street a piece, now.

“One of my girls clerks in a drug store. Another works in the hosiery mills. She's just a beginner. She works four days in the week and makes $18 a week. Some of the workers who are experienced make more. They are paid by the piece there.

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A man came in with some typed sheets of manuscript. After he left, Ezra brought them over to show them to me. “This is an article I've written to go in the newspaper in the People's Forum,' he said. “I don't know as it will get printed.” The article, an argument in favor of prohibition as against A.B.C. stores, was mainly a list of texts drawn from the Bible; such as “[Mine?] is a mocker, strong drink, is raging and he that is deceived thereby is not wise. The marriage at [Cana?] of [Galilee?] was not mentioned. So fare the People's Forum has not published [Exra's?] contribution, and as the issue has been temporarily settled since Ezra wrote the letter it is not likely to be. But it doubless would have pleased Ezra's congregations.

“You know,” Ezra said, as I rose to leave, “I'm writing the story of my life. I haven't got very far yet. But talking things over this way has helped me. It has made my experiences clearer in my mind.

“As I waited for the bus, I took another look at the barber shop. From the street, the one-story, flat-roofed building looked very small.